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Analysis of CINCPAC Evaluation of Effects of Bombing Halt

Economic Recovery

1. The general implication that a rebuilding of the economy would be initiated immediately upon a cessation of the bombing does not appear realistic. It is possible that Hanoi would choose to step up reconstruction efforts on LOC's and those industrial facilities that contribute most to the war effort. It is unlikely, however, that reconstruction of all of modern industry would be undertaken to any extent until some more permanent settlement of the war was effected.

2. Major interdicted LOC's will be quickly repaired -- but not to full use -- in a matter of weeks. The initial through serviceability of any LOC after the bombing stopped would still require use of temporary bridges or other lower capacity alternate crossings because new permanent bridges would require probably 3 to 6 months for construction. The Vinh line, for example, could not be operated at full pre-strike capacity until the load factor on all bridges was raised to the original tonnage.

3. The assessment of recovery in the modern industrial sector understates the time that will be required to fully restore industry to pre-strike levels of operation. Recovery will be almost entirely dependent on massive foreign aid and in the electric power, cement, and textiles industries, will require from one to two years to organize and to carry out.

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4. An estimated 50 percent of damaged electric generating capacity could be restored to service within 6 months, but complete restoration will take about 2 years. It will take at least one year for recovery in the textile industry, involving either relocation of dispersed textile machinery or installation of new machinery, and major reconstruction of the largest plant. More than one year will be required to rebuild the Haiphong cement plant. Bomb damage to other industry probably could be repaired in 3 to 6 months.

5. The restoration of bulk POL storage capacity would have a relatively low priority since the present system is adequate, and bulk storage would be extremely vulnerable in the event that air attacks were renewed.

6. The statement that a wealth of manpower would be available for redirection in the war effort is a gross exaggeration. The number of North Vietnamese diverted to full-time and part-time war related activities is only about 600,000. About half of these are women and some are men too old to serve in the military. This figure includes an estimated 110,000 in air defense and approximately 300,000 for repair of LOC's. About half of the total 600,000 work on a part-time basis when the need arises. The number of men freed for military duty in Laos or South Vietnam by a cessation of bombing would appear to be much lower than implied.

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7. The reduced rice harvests in 1966 and 1967 were due more to adverse weather than to war-related factors, although manpower diversions and transportation difficulties undoubtedly contributed. Since weather is such a controlling factor in North Vietnam's agricultural output, it is not certain that a successful harvest would follow a cessation of bombing. Nor is it certain that food imports would diminish. North Vietnam, normally a food deficit country, imported over 160,000 tons in 1964. Food imports in 1967 will amount to about 400,000 tons, two and a half times the pre-bombing level. In spite of the bombing food imports in 1966 were low and a comparison of 1967 imports with those of 1966, is misleading.

8. There is no strong evidence that North Vietnamese morale has been depressed because of recent below-average rice harvests. Food rations have been maintained and substitutes of imported wheat flour, less palatable to North Vietnamese, have not yet been extensive enough to cause serious unrest.

Military

9. Paragraph B3 erroneously implies that NVNAF fighter aircraft have been out-of-country because major airfields were not serviceable. Actually, major airfields have been quickly returned to at least limited serviceability after attacks.

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